

Story 910 (1964 Tape  
erased on  
field trip  
after contents  
transcribed)

Narrator: Nebiye Birkan, in 50s

Location: Taşköprü, kaza town  
in Kastamonu Province

Date: July 1964

Finger Child

TE<sup>r</sup> Once there was and once there was not, a long time ago,  
when God's creatures were many but no one talked very much  
Back in that time there was a couple who had no <sup>children</sup> children.  
Years passed after their marriage, but still they had no  
Z children. One day they prayed to God, saying, "Give us a  
child, O God! We shall be satisfied even if he is no larger  
than a finger!"

God must have accepted their prayer, for nine months  
after that they had a son, but he was only the size of a  
finger. Months and years passed, but the child did not grow.  
His eating and sleeping were normal, but he still remained  
the size of a finger. However, his intelligence grew  
even if his body did not.

The child's father was a <sup>woodcutter</sup> ~~woodcutter~~ who would cut wood  
in the forest, take it to a shop which he had in a small  
town, and store it there. Then he would sell wood to anyone who  
needed firewood. They had a cart and two horses which they  
used to bring the wood from the forest to the shop. One

Finger Child's mother said to him, "By this time of the

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day your father must have a load of wood ready to bring home. Take the cart out to him, and after he has loaded it with wood, bring it back to town." She placed him in the ear of one of the horses, for he was too small to ride in the cart. When he was ready to go, he said "Deh!" to the horses.

Along the way there were two men who noticed the cart moving down the road without anyone in the driver's seat. Surprised to see it proceeding without any driver, they wondered where this cart came from and where it was going. When the cart reached the place where the boy's father was cutting wood, a voice said, "Father, I am here!" The two observers were even more amazed at this.

The father came and took the child from the horse's ear and placed him on the ground. After he had loaded the wagon with wood, he put Finger Child in the horse's ear once again and sent him back to town.

two men who had been watching all of this concluded that here was a great opportunity for them. They decided to steal Finger Child and take him to Istanbul, for they thought that they could make a great amount of money exhibiting him there. After the wagon was out of sight of the woodcutter they stopped the team and took the child from the horse's ear.

<sup>1</sup>Oxen, donkeys, and horses in Turkey are often directed by the same sounds: Deh for giddap and Choosh (Turkish, cuş) for whoa.

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One of the men wanted to carry Finger Child in his pocket, and the other wanted to hide him under his hat. While the two were arguing about this, Finger Child escaped and disappeared into the bushes and thorns that grew there. The men searched for him for several days without ever seeing Finger Child again. The boy's parents, who did not know what had happened to him, were grieved at his loss.

A wolf found Finger Child in the brush and swallowed him. Since the wolf had gobbled him down in one gulp, the child remained alive in the wolf's belly. One day Finger Child shouted, "Hey, Wolf! Don't keep looking all over for food out here. I'll direct you to a good place to get all the food you want without even hunting for it."

The wolf believed what the child said, and they began to travel according to the directions the child gave. When they came to the town where Finger Child's parents lived, the child directed the wolf to his own house, which they entered through an open kitchen window. Then Finger Child shouted, "Mother Father!" The parents recognized their son's voice at once, but they couldn't find him anywhere, although they searched the house for him. When they reached the kitchen and found the wolf there, they heard his voice again: "I am in the wolf's belly. Shoot him or stab him in a part of his body that will not hit me. Then I shall be able to come out again

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Finger Child's father killed the wolf. After that they took the boy, unharmed, from the belly of the wolf.